

HB1150 Stakeholder Forum

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VCU Student Commons

Critical Questions for Discussion

*Breakout Session Flipchart Notes
Richmond Salon I*

Group I Participants:

George Price, Upper Tennessee River Roundtable
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Donna Pugh Johnson, Virginia Agribusiness Council
Sally Thomas, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors
Rick Parrish, Southern Environmental Law Center
Denise Thompson, Virginia Municipal League
David Phemister, The Nature Conservancy
Julia Hillegass, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
Tom Roberts, Smurfit Stone, Virginia Manufacturing Association
Brooks Smith, Attorney, Hunton & Williams
Wilkie Chaffin, VaSWCD
Susan Bulbulkaya, Chesapeake Bay Commission

Group I Staff:

Barbara Board, facilitator – Virginia Tech, Virginia Cooperative Extension
Fran Geissler, DCR
Christine Watlington, DCR

Others present:

Russ Baxter, DCR
Joan Salvati, DCR
Brian Rothenberg, Governor's Fellow, SNR
Perida Giles, VDACS
John Kennedy, DEQ
Tony Watkinson, VMRC
Ellen Gilensky, DEQ
Kathy Frahm, DEQ

I. What should Virginia focus on?

- Emphasize proven practices
- Education for youth and adults.

- Focus on attainable targets (water quality standards)
- Look at all nutrient sources (including atmospheric deposition)
- Promote conservation practices for widely such as storm drain labels
- Better investigation to determine causes of impairments.
- Regulate fertilizer for home
- Set realistic goals based on sound science
- Focus on cost-effective priority practices outlined in Chesapeake Bay Commission report
- Move to long term contracts with farmers
- Don't continue to develop TMDL plans that are not going to be implemented.
- Reach Governor Kaine's land conservation
- Focus on tools for land preservation (habitat prevention, conservation, etc.)
- Growth management tools for local governments
- Focus on whole state, rather than just geographic regions;
- Look at regulatory requirements for sources beyond what currently regulated
- Focus on TMDL waters first that have threatened or endangered species or a public health risk
- Need consistent funding
- Keep farmers on the land
- Focus on full implementation of existing program rather than create new ones.
- Don't make existing problems worse by allowing additional discharges in TMDL waters
- Public will support tax increases for water quality improvement
- Focus on BMP implementation in both urban and rural setting
- Get baseline data and monitor BMP effectiveness.
- Fully implement agricultural provisions of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act
- Provide state support for Watershed Roundtables and the statewide association of roundtables (Virginia Watersheds Alliance)

2. What should Virginia be doing for water quality protection and restoration that we are not doing? Likewise, what are we doing that we should not be doing because the practice isn't working or isn't producing the water quality improvements that are needed/desired?

- Embrace watershed planning
- Stop spending money on plans that do not include implementation
- Continue agricultural cost share program
- Add compliance officers to VDACS staff
- Include more rigorous monitoring of BMP effectiveness
- Adequate and dedicated funding
- Outreach and technical assistance to local government on implementation of tributary strategies
- Monitor developing/emerging pollutants

- Stop TMDL preparation where no data exists
- Identify source of long term \$ for natural resources
- Appropriate more \$ for land conservation
- Don't expect results from underfunded programs.
- Establish an urban BMP cost share program
- Drop the fertilizer application agreements with Home Depot and other retailers.
- More direct monitoring and sampling
- Don't penalize facilities that undertake voluntary reductions
- Revise water quality standards to be more reflective of uses and natural conditions (similar to revisions made to Chesapeake Bay standards)
- Focus on streams restored, rather than counting TMDLs.

3. What roadblocks exist that might inhibit or delay the successful implementation of our cleanup plan? How do you suggest we remove or mitigate the roadblock?

- Amount of \$ per BMP is low and compliance/reporting is complex which discourages participants
- Need to establish long-term trust relationship with farmers
- Need to be adaptive and innovative in programs
- Lack of public awareness e.g. "the water looks o.k."
- Need greater public access.
- Need to spread costs to all those who benefit (public)
- Recognize need to increase the political will
- Show real results
- Fix attitude that unless state pays, it's not our responsibility
- Need massive education campaign so the public understands they are responsible
- We assume the public won't pay for improvement
- We need to better recognize and celebrate accomplishments
- Less finger pointing
- Need for greater flexibility in programs (performance based)
- Inconsistency of funding has hampered program effectiveness through high turnover
- Local enforcement of agricultural provisions of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act is needed.
- Don't target BMPs at the state level. Let districts decide.
- Increase tax credit for conservation practices.
- Need for consistent, adequate \$
- Need for better coordination between agencies and other players

4. How do we set reasonable and achievable time frames to accomplish the clean-up plan objectives?

- Allow for adaptive approach with interim milestones

- Set schedules for the worst impairments first or most critical habitats
- Set interim milestones to track progress and achievement
- Convene another forum of experts in scheduling to get input.
- Involve the public in setting schedules because they must “buy-in”
- Program managers are best to determine timeframes because they know program capabilities and resource needs
- Implementation (for incentive based programs) depends on consistent funding to drive progress